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ECHN

A bimonthly newsletter for individuals associated with
Eastern Connecticut Health Network

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Congressman Simmons Visits RGH Bearing Good News From Washington

Staff Volunteers Needed To Answer "Dr. Strong" Code

Physically fit, even-tempered staff volunteers are needed to participate in Physical/Psychological Management Training (PMT) at MMH and RGH. This training program will provide staff volunteers with the skills necessary to work effectively with patients from throughout our facilities who may become agitated or threatening and to assist their colleagues in efficiently managing such situations. For further information, please contact Barbara Pascal-Gladstone (Child/Adolescent Ambulatory Services) at Ext. 3660 or Patrick Wilkinson (Intensive Psych Services) at Ext. 2186.

On May 3 at Rockville General Hospital, U.S. Representative Rob Simmons (R-2nd District) presented ECHN with a \$300,000 federal grant for the hospital's inpatient and outpatient facility upgrade. The funds will make possible a state-of-the-art cardio-pulmonary monitoring system in the new RGH Emergency Department. This system will allow physicians and staff to monitor patients with the latest technology available.

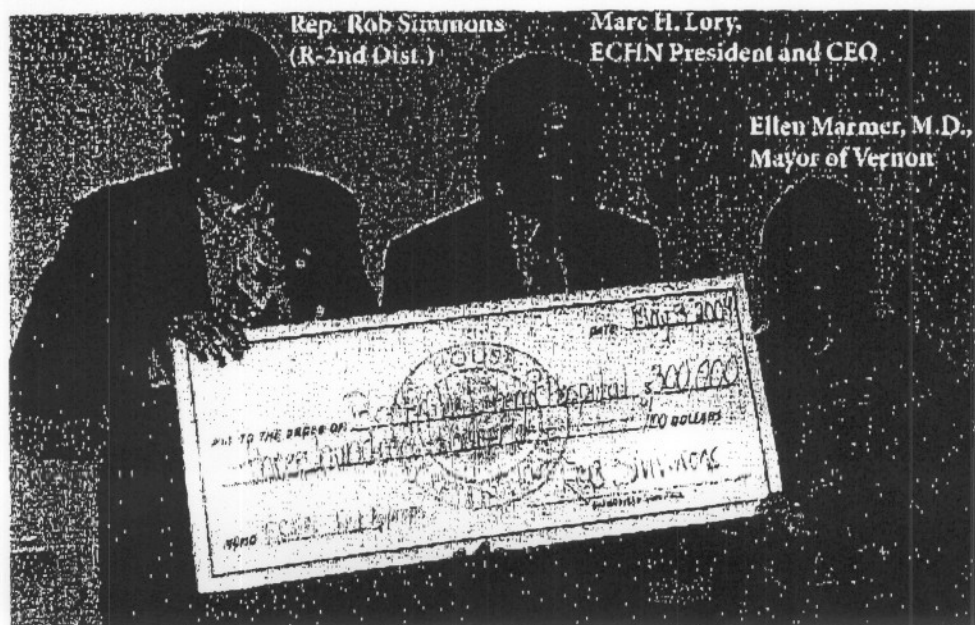
"Although it was a difficult budget year in Washington, Congressman Simmons was very interested in supporting our request for funds," said Marc H. Lory, ECHN President and CEO, in his welcoming remarks. "He and his staff coordinated support among the other members of the Connecticut delegation — Senators Christopher Dodd and Joseph Lieberman and Repre-

sentatives John Larson (D-1st District) and Rosa DeLauro (D-3rd District), who were our advocates before the Appropriations Committee.

The grant was apportioned from funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which had been designated to assist hospital projects in areas that the federal government identified as being medically underserved. It is a grant that many of the hospitals in Connecticut compete for. ECHN is honored to be one of the hospitals to receive funds.

"Congressman Simmons has demonstrated a unique understanding of health care issues and an appreciation for the health care needs of his constituents," said Mr. Lory. "He recognizes the importance of the hospitals in his district, not only to the quality of health in their communities, but also as an important economic force."

When Congressman Simmons addressed the group, his words affirmed Mr. Lory's assessment of Simmons' understanding of health care. "To help people sustain their good health and to help them when they have failing health is more than just a job — it's a calling — I respect that, and thank you all for answering the call," said Simmons. He said he also understood how huge an undertaking the RGH project was. He learned the complexity of such construction while growing up and watching his father, who was an architect of hospitals in New York City. "In every case, when you design a hospital in New York, you are dealing with pre-existing facilities," said



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... Simmons

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Simmons. "There is nothing more difficult than to modernize a hospital working with a pre-existing facility. It takes tremendous teamwork and coordination from everybody involved, including your patients. It's not easy, and for that I also commend you on this project."

Simmons mentioned the importance of the project in relationship to the increase in hospital visitations in the community over the past decade. "As I recall, the numbers were 15,000-16,000 visits a year in the late 90s and they are now up to 20,000 visits, with a projection of 25,000-26,000 visits a year in the future," said Simmons. "The demand for health care, the growing population, and the increasing requests for services are all something we have to plan for. With that spirit in mind, I was more than happy to respond to Marc's request for assistance."

Simmons outlined his plan of support for appropriating more funds for the project by saying, "What we'll do is get a little bit in 2004. Then we'll get some more in 2005. And once we're halfway there, we'll really twist the arm of Congress and say, 'If you don't finish this project, all of the investment will be in vain.' That's when we'll seal the deal in 2006 or 2007."

Ellen Marmer, M.D., Mayor of Vernon and member of the ECHN Medical Staff, was invited to say a few words on behalf of the town of Vernon. She explained how RGH's project was one part of the upgrade that community residents could expect to see for Rockville. "Not only are we going to have the new expansion, but pretty soon we're going to have a walkway to a \$6 million intermodal project — a parking garage [located to the east of the hospital]," predicted Mayor Marmer. Her sentiments then quickly turned back to RGH and her personal attachment to the hospital. "A hospital is more than its bricks and mortar," said Marmer. "It's the people who are dedicated to serve it and to make it the best that it can be. The one thing I personally never want to see go from this hospital is the old mansion entrance. It is special; it is unique. For those of us who have been in practice in this town for many years — my husband and I have practiced for more than 35 years — it's an

entrance that has a lot of special meaning. Mayor Marmer thanked Congressman Rick Simmons for the federal government's financial support to the town and lightly heartedly said that "We look forward to asking you for more and more."

Other attendees included Town Administrator Larry Shaffer and several members of the Town Council and Administrative Offices, Hap Fitts (Chairman of the ECHN Board of Trustees), other ECHN Board members, and a good number of RGH medical and administrative staff.

The event ended with the presentation of the grant and a little banter. "The good news is that the check isn't in the mail — it's right here!" said Simmons when he presented the oversized whiteboard check to Marc Lory, with Mayor Marmer at his side. "And Bill McGurk (ECHN Trustee and President & CEO of Rockville Bank) is here to cash it," quipped Marmer.